

COMMENT ON KHRUSHCHEV'S DENUNCIATION OF STALIN

Second Report

UNITED KINGDOM

Daily Worker; London, June 22

The political committee of the British Communist Party said yesterday that in the absence of a denial or an official text the U.S. version of the Khrushchev report on Stalin must be taken as more or less authentic. The British Communists protested to the Soviet Communist Party nearly 3 months ago at the failure to publish the report. The evil practices disclosed in the report have violated the Socialist conceptions of democracy, said the political committee's statement.

The time has come for all countries to abolish the death penalty in time of peace. The revised edition of the party's program, "The British Road to Socialism," will pay special attention to personal and civil liberty. All conditions are present for a great united working-class advance in Britain and throughout the world, said the statement which is published in full below.

The political committee of the Communist Party has had under consideration the unofficial published version of Comrade Khrushchev's report to the private session of the 20th Congress of the CPSU, together with the discussion in our party. At the private session of the 24th national congress of our party on Apr. 1, a resolution was passed and conveyed to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, regretting that a public statement on this question had not been made by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which could have enabled the members of all Communist Parties and the staunch friends of the Soviet Union to have understood fully the seriousness of the issues and helped them to a better understanding of everything that is involved. Our Party has not received any official version of the report of Comrade Khrushchev.

The continued absence of an official report has led to the publication of unofficial versions through gradual leakages and by sources hostile to Socialism. This has made many Communists outside the Soviet Union dependent on such enemy sources for information on these vital matters and has thus added unnecessary difficulties to the estimation and discussion of the facts. In the light of the unofficial text now published, which in the absence of official denial may be regarded as more or less authentic, we reaffirm the general lines of the resolution of our executive committee of May 13.

We consider that the 20th Congress of the CPSU was correct in condemning the cult of the individual and in endorsing the return to the Leninist principles of collective leadership and inner party democracy. We consider that the 20th Congress was correct in frankly exposing all the evils which followed from the departure from the Leninist principles, in order to put an end to these evils. All Communists, in common with all democratic and progressive people, are deeply shocked by the injustices and crimes which during the period under review violated the essential principles of Socialist Democracy and legality and dishonored the noble cause of Communism. We repeat that such evil practices are totally alien to Socialism and Communism.

At the same time, we recognize that these evils arose not as a necessary accompaniment of working-class rule and Soviet democracy, as the enemies of Socialism pretend, but as a result of the violation of the Socialist principles and during a specific period of abnormal strain between 1934 and 1953. This was the period of the rise of fascism abroad, the preparation of war, the Second World War, and the Cold War. The Soviet leaders have exposed the evils and abuses of this period in order to correct them and make a decisive turn to the fulfillment of the principles of Leninism, collective leadership, Socialist democracy and creative Marxist work in all fields of science, literature and art.

We recognize that in spite of the grave harm caused by these abuses the Soviet people achieved very great and historic successes. In the face of terrible difficulties, they established Socialism, withstood and defeated the Nazi onslaught, and reconstructed their country after the unparalleled devastation of the war. This achievement deserves the admiration of all and shows the superiority of the Socialist system over capitalism and the creative possibilities it opens up for the people.

The 20th Congress of the CPSU itself recorded the historic fact that Socialism has now become a world system. It made major contributions to Marxist theory, and helped the working-class movement in all countries by its declarations on the possibility of preventing world war, the peaceful transition to Socialism, and the new opportunities for developing working-class unity. The discussion arising from the 20th Congress and from the revelations regarding the 1934-1953 period of the Soviet Union is stimulating fresh and fruitful thought and endeavor in every field of Communist work and practice.

It is clear that a further review and discussion of the questions opened up by the report to the private session of the 20th Congress of the CPSU is needed.

We agree with the observations of Comrade Togliatti and the French Communist Party that it will be necessary to make a profound Marxist analysis of the causes of the degeneration in the functioning of Soviet democracy and party democracy; that it is not enough to attribute these developments solely to the character of one individual, and that a more adequate estimate of the role of Stalin, both in its positive and negative aspects, will be necessary.

It is clear that the steps taken for strengthening the operation of Socialist legality and safeguarding the rights of citizens will lead to a further examination of all problems of the functioning of Socialist democracy and legality. Those responsible for past violations of Socialist democracy and for crimes against the people are being punished, and this is just and necessary. At the same time, it is understandable that concern has been expressed at the application of the death penalty in a recent trial in the Soviet Union. We express the view that in the light of the present world situation and the strengthened position of the Socialist camp it should now be possible to bring about the abolition of the death penalty in peacetime in all countries, and we recognize that we have a special responsibility to work for the fulfillment of this aim in Britain and in the colonial countries under British rule.

Within our own party, we shall need to carry forward and encourage the widest and most thorough discussion, as already begun, of our political and organizational methods, the functioning of party democracy, and the tackling of the problems before us, our relations with other sections of the labor movement and the aims of unity, as indicated in the executive committee's resolution. We shall also carry forward work on a new edition of "The British Road to Socialism," in which, among the many questions which will come up for review, we shall need to expand that section which shows how the democratic liberties won by the people can be maintained and extended, and how Socialist legality will be guaranteed.

The enemies of our party hope that this discussion will weaken the party and open the way for attempts to smuggle anti-Marxist, anti-Communist bourgeois conceptions into the Party, striking at the roots of the Communist principles and organization. On the contrary, our party members and organizations will know how to conduct the discussion so as to strengthen every aspect of our party's work and activity. The democracy of our party is the widest democracy of any party in Britain. The freedom of discussion and democratic functioning which is possible in our party, and which the leaders of other parties fear to permit in theirs, is possible because of the essential unity of our party's Marxist outlook and our determination to reach, in the light of Marxism, unity on the policy which is in the best interests of the British working class.

Let us never forget, throughout this discussion, that the cause of Communism, of national independence, of freedom and peace, is advancing with giant strides throughout the world. All conditions are present here in Britain for a great advance of the labor movement. Given the correct policy and leadership, the British people will defeat Toryism and move forward to Socialism. It is the mission of our Communist Party to help achieve these aims, and it is in this spirit that, while discussing the urgent and important issues raised by the 20th Congress of the CPSU, we work to develop the greatest united movement of the people for the policy put forward by our 24th national congress.

THE ECONOMIST, JUNE 16, 1956

Phlegm in Latin Throats

COMMUNIST editors in the West were placed in a most awkward situation when Mr Khrushchev's "secret speech" was released by the State Department. With no censorship at their disposal, they could not prevent other newspapers from splashing it on their front pages. Were they to follow suit and reveal what was still a secret in Moscow, or should their readers be left to learn the horrid truth from a non-party source, without any mitigating comment? Paradoxically, the Anglo-Saxon *Daily Workers* have chosen to brave it out, while their usually vigorous Latin counterparts—*Unità* and *L'Humanité*—have been prudently silent.

The New York *Daily Worker* actually blamed the Russians for failing to break the news themselves, and thus allowing the State Department to exploit the situation. It criticised Mr Khrushchev for not mentioning the persecution of the Jews in his catalogue of crimes, and firmly concluded that the record was still far from complete. This language, mixed with a fair measure of self-criticism, is certainly an important novelty and a symptom of the new mood. Admittedly the Anglo-Saxon parties are only poor relations in the communist family. Signs of ferment can also be seen, however, in the big communist parties of France and Italy. If their newspapers manage to clear their throats and speak up, there will be something really new on the western front.

THE ECONOMIST, JUNE 23, 1956

Defence is Not Expendable

NO apology is needed for returning yet again with a warning note to the subject of defence economies which is at present capturing public attention and engrossing Cabinet time. It has taken the near-disasters of twenty years of war and cold war to teach the democracies that they must stand ready and equipped to defend themselves against any threat to the balance of power. Much blood and treasure have been paid to learn the lesson. We must not decide now without the most searching debate and exhaustive public explanation to go back on these painfully trodden tracks; and we must never for an instant forget the effect of our decisions (whether on economy or conscription) upon our friends, across the Atlantic and in Europe.

There is no need to suppose yet that the primrose path is likely to be taken; the first batch of savings when they are announced may in themselves be sensible enough; in fact, the doubt has rather been whether they would be real. But in the mood of today the danger of penny-wise, pound-foolish is ever present. There are persuasive arguments for new thoughts on defence. The least persuasive is the argument which simply says that because an essential component of defence strength is economic strength—as indeed it is—defence must give way (against even the counsel of Adam Smith) to opulence. There are other candidates for savings, if the devil drives, in the welfare state; and our economic ills can be cured only by policy, not by short-sighted short cuts. The most persuasive argument is that too much of the present defence apparatus is out of date; but the answer must take due heed of the high cost and long incubation of up-to-date replacements. The most difficult and deceptive argument is the one which says that, fearful of "the bomb," the Russians and their allies have now sworn off war and turned over to economic and political warfare instead.

No doubt the communists, like the rest of us, fear destruction and will not court it. No doubt they are beginning, with high hopes of success, on a campaign across the world of trade and propaganda. No doubt we and our allies have now to turn with fresh competitive zest to this rivalry of wits and resources; and no doubt what we can fairly and safely subtract from the claims of defence should go first of all to aid us in this other effort. But these are not options between which we can now choose: defence or "competitive coexistence." Both have to be faced.

Two questions must be asked before the wrong conclusions are drawn from the apparent shift of emphasis in communist policy. To the first question—why the shift?—the answer is obvious: the communists do not want war, whether all-out or limited, because they cannot reckon upon winning it; and they cannot reckon upon winning it because the western powers have, haltingly enough, made themselves too strong. The conclusion is as obvious as the answer: the western powers must stay strong if the communist powers are not to

shift back again to the threat of war—or, more probably and insidiously, of blackmail short of war. The second question is whether the Russians and their allies themselves have suited their deeds to their more peaceful words. The answer is that, in spite of (or indeed because of) what seems to be a large and belated revision of their defence arrangements which has reduced their wasteful and old-fashioned standing armies an overload that we do not possess), they may by all accounts present, if we falter, a greater military threat in numbers and in quality than ever, with possibly an advantage in many modern weapons. The conclusion, again, is obvious.

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The Cabinet should not weary in well-doing, but Ministers must be sure that it is well done. The case has been stated more than once in these columns for a Minister of Defence with a will of his own and teeth. The state of affairs which has seen such vast defence expenditure with such disappointingly small results is clearly capable of reform. The much talked-of savings of stocks which in modern war may be otiose can possibly be justified. The service passion for clinging on to out-moded things, at high expense, can usefully be curbed. But there are three prescriptions which, in recting out duplication and waste, Ministers will ignore at their, and the country's, peril.

The first prescription is that any cuts must make military sense : they must be related to the balance of power and not simply to the balance of payments, life-and-death matter though that is as well. The second, which springs equally from our military and our economic necessities, is that no cuts shall be made except in concert with our allies : those who talk of fresh positive tasks for Nato would do well to start by making the existing concert of policies and arms and the dovetailing of defence programmes and burdens the realities which at present they are not. The third prescription, which is at the core of the first and the second, is that this essential process of getting the largest effectiveness in up-to-date joint defence out of the lowest expenditure of money and resources must be conducted hand-in-hand and step-by-step with the United States. Defence economies are possible, indeed indispensable, in this "long haul" ; and the progressive refashioning of the forces offers more savings than any reasonable catch-crop this year. But if the haul itself slackens, then the most hopeful feature of our times by contrast with a more myopic past is clouded, and we stand again in an old danger.

ITALY

THE NEW YORK TIMES, TUESDAY, JUNE 26, 1956.

Excerpts From Togliatti's Report to the Italian Communists

ROME, June 25 (Reuters)—Following are excerpts from Palmiro Togliatti's statement last night to the Central Committee of the Italian Communist party:

Khrushchev Report

I do not know if there will be raised here the question of the manner in which our party was informed of the criticisms and, in particular, of the precise content of the report made by Comrade [Nikita S.] Khrushchev.

We recognize that the manner was bad, but on the other hand, we ask that it be recognized that we were in no way responsible.

For obvious reasons of correctness toward our Soviet comrades we could not act in any other than we did.

There has been expressed in our party a certain critical malcontent with regard to certain aspects and the form of the report.

I wish to recall to our comrades that the report cannot be considered as something isolated. It must be considered in relationship with all that has been said and that provides a framework for it.

We may not be pleased with the manner in which the denunciation [of errors] was brought to the knowledge of the Communist movement in capitalist countries.

But we must recognize that the denunciation of the errors and the action energetically undertaken to correct them are eminently positive acts. The correction had to be made and it ought to be salutary.

It will constitute a reaffirmation and will have as its consequence the reinforcement of the democratic character of the Socialist society [of the Soviet Union].

The report itself does not give an exhaustive and satisfactory answer to all the questions that rise to the mind of one who examines it.

There arises the question of what made such grave errors

possible and why it was that around them there should have been created an atmosphere of consent and acceptance which almost imply co-responsibility on the part of those who today denounce the errors.

From this arises the question not only of the necessary corrections but of guarantees against the repetition of similar errors.

Dictatorship of the Proletariat

The construction of Socialist society constitutes a transitory period between the revolution that strikes down capitalism and the triumph of socialism and the passage to communism.

There can be discussion about how long could and should this transition period last, and it is equally evident that in the course of it there may be different phases and therefore different forms of democratic development.

In the Soviet Union there have been different phases.

We cannot exclude, indeed we consider very likely, that in the Soviet Union, while political direction remains in the hands of the working class and its allies, democracy may and should be developed in a new way, but keeping its original characteristics.

First Marx and Engels and later Lenin, in developing the theory [of the dictatorship of the proletariat], affirm that the apparatus of the bourgeois state cannot serve to build a Socialist society.

The apparatus must be broken up and destroyed by the working class and replaced by the apparatus of the proletarian state, that is of the state directed by the working class itself.

Does this position remain fully valid today?

When we in fact affirm that progress toward socialism is not only possible by democratic means but also by using parliamentary forms, it is evident that we correct something in this position, taking into ac-

count the changes that have come about and that are in course in the world.

And here there arises the question of the existence of different parties in a Socialist society and of the contribution that different parties can make to the advance toward socialism.

It is useless, and indeed

idiotic, for people to tell us that our solidarity over the decades with the Communist party of the Soviet Union means that we hold that everywhere in the world and in all situations the same things must be done as are done in Russia.

What has been done in the Soviet Union is not the model of what may and can be done in other countries.

We admit without difficulty that a society where socialism is being built there may be several parties, of which some collaborate in this construction.

We admit that the thrust toward profound transformations of a Socialist nature may come from different parties,

which succeed in agreeing with each other in order to bring these transformations about.

The point can be reached and, if I am not mistaken, is now being discussed between the leaders of a great country today ruled by the Communists where parties themselves are extinguished as a result of the attainment of a unitary Socialist society.

The Italian Way Toward Socialism

We must continue in the search for and execution of our own way, of an Italian way of development toward socialism. But I would like to correct those comrades who have said as if it were something automatic and acquired, that an Italian way of development toward socialism means the parliamentary way and nothing

more.

That is not true. The Italian way is a way of development toward socialism that takes into account the conditions already achieved and the victories won.

Since these victories have created a wide basis of democratic development, the Italian way is a way which envisages development on the democratic terrain, enforcement of democracy and an evolution toward certain profound social reforms.

The use of parliament is one of the ways of developing democratic action to obtain profound structural reforms. But to realize this possibility certain conditions must be realized.

There must be a parliament that is truly a mirror of the country. There must be a parliament that functions, and there must be a great popular movement that enables the country to express those needs, which then can be satisfied by a parliament in which the popular forces have obtained a sufficiently strong representation.

Finally, for efficacious use of the possibilities of parliament to achieve democratic and socialist renewal, there must be a great popular mass movement that produces strong parliamentary groups, bound to the working masses, capable of demanding from parliament the satisfaction of the peoples' requests and demands.

What are the objectives that today we should set for ourselves?

We intend, on the democratic terrain, to develop the action and the struggle of the working masses to modify profoundly the economic structure of Italian society.

Italian Red Plan Outlined

That is, we intend to orientate Italian society toward an economy founded on a guarantee of the maximum well-being of the workers; on the elimination of unemployment; on the struggle against poverty.

To obtain this, great technical

progress is needed, as well as great progress of the whole national economy.

We want this progress, and we denounce monopolistic capitalism because, if here and here it guarantees some island of progress and reaps great advantage from it, it does not guarantee the general progress of the whole nation—technical, economic and social.

We must discuss whether there is not something to be changed in our conception of who should be the allies of the working class in Italy, whether we should not extend this concept not only to the peasant masses of the South and the rest of Italy, but also the masses of the working and middle class in the cities.

Here, it is not a question of speech-making but of attentively seeking out programs and solutions that will disperse the fears that these masses may have of an alliance with the party that aims at socialism. To make them understand that in our country, given its structure, the working middle classes of the cities can and should make their contribution to the building of the Socialist society and that they will in no way be the victims of the building of this Socialist society but that they will collaborate in its management.

Relations With the Italian Socialist Party

With the Socialist party we have achieved a very high degree of unity, establishing in agreement with it that unity of action that remains a fundamental conquest of the Italian working and the laboring masses.

To this conquest we attach the value of a principle.

The whole movement toward socialism would suffer profoundly if the unity of action should be—I won't say lost, but attenuated or weakened.

We are striving that this should not come about.

Organization of the Italian Communist Party

The aim of the organization of the party must be to give the party the maximum capacity to make contact with all levels of the working population.

Therefore, the organization should be such as to make possible and to stimulate the activity of all members of the party, to enable them to establish ever new links with the various groups of the populace.

But to have this, there is needed a renewed examination of the structure of the party and a better definition and ordering of its internal regime so that it be a regime of democracy and of constant active participation of all the comrades in the solution of all questions.

Greater democracy and freedom mean and must mean even greater activity on the part of those belonging to the party, not only in obedience or in discussion but in serious work, undertaken with spirit and initiative, for the policy of the party in all fields.

[In a long introductory passage to his speech, Signor Togliatti examined the decisions of the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist party with regard to democratic methods and the diversity of ways toward socialism.]

Soviet Party Is Praised

There is no doubt for us that the Soviet Union remains the first great historical model of the conquest of power by the working class and of the use of this power in the most energetic and effective way to brush away the resistance of the bourgeoisie and the other reactionary classes.

The experience thus accomplished is an experience without limits, which has its great positive aspects, which are prevalent, and also its negative aspects.

The study of this experience has been and will continue to be a precious teaching, not only for the Communist parties, which must always return to it, but for all those who wish to understand the realities of today.

This experience, however, cannot contain either a ready-made solution of all the problems that arise today in these countries that are led by the working class and the Communist parties or, even less, the ready-made solution of the questions that arise in countries where the Communist parties or parties orientated toward socialism are in opposition.

The experience achieved in the construction of a Socialist society in the Soviet Union cannot contain directives for the solution of all the problems that may face us and the Communists of other countries, be they in power or not.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, JUNE 24, 1956.

Nenni's Criticism of Khrushchev and the Soviet System

ROME, June 23 (Reuters)—Following are excerpts from an article in Italian by Pietro Nenni, leader of the Left-Wing Socialist party:

"Thus, comrades, the facts stand. We ought to tell the shameful facts" with these words Nikita Khrushchev concluded on the night of Feb. 24 last the part devoted to "the errors" of Stalin in the secret report presented to the delegates of the Twentieth Congress of the Communist party of the Soviet Union.

The necessity for thereport and for the extraordinary and secret session of the congress was the consequence of the amazement by which the delegates to the Congress had been seized when they heard, in the ten preceding days, raining down from the congress platform a whole series of criticisms of the cult of personality and of the Stalin myth; criticisms that culminated in the drastic affirmation of Anastas J. Mikoyan according to which for twenty years in Russia there had not in fact existed a collegiate direction of the party and of the state but instead there had been diffused the cult of the personality of Stalin.

Publication by U. S. Cited

It is neither the last nor the least of these surprises of the Twentieth Congress that the secret report of Khrushchev has been published by the State Department, which on June 4 put out a version that Moscow has not denied. It is therefore through the medium of the press section of U. S. I. S. [United States Information Service] that the Communist parties themselves, represented at the Moscow congress, have come to know one of the most serious and dramatic documents in the Communist literature of the world.

Let us see in what the "shameful facts" revealed by first party of the Soviet Union consist.

The first part of the report is devoted to the re-evocation of an old polemic, of the antagonism, so to speak, between Lenin and Stalin. An antagonism

well known in all its details outside the U. S. S. R., but which the official historians of the Soviet Union had passed over for thirty years, as if the testament of Lenin had not even existed.

Dramatic Phase of Report

The report enters its most dramatic phase when it gives details of the purges, trials and executions from 1936 to 1938.

From that tragic period of the Soviet Revolution we already knew the four trials that ended with a series of death sentences: the trial of the "seventeen" ([Grigory E.] Zinoviev, [Lev B.] Kamenev, Smirnov, etc.) in August, 1936.

The trial of the "seventeen" (Gregory Platakov, Kari Radek, Sokolnikov, etc.) in January, 1937.

The trial of Marshal Tukachevsky and of a group of generals and Red Army commandants in June, 1937. The trial of the "twenty-one" (Alexei Rykov, Bukharin, Krestinsky, Henryk G. Yagoda, etc.) in March, 1938.

With regard to these trials, with the exception of Tukachevsky's, which was kept

secret for reasons of military security, there exists an abundant literature, including a shorthand summary of the hearings.

It was evident from that time on that Soviet public life had undergone in the previous ten years a double process of degeneration: On the one hand, of the party and state machine toward forms of bureaucratization and terrorism, and on the other hand, of the internal opposition toward forms of conspiracy and palace revolution.

What was known at that time was only a part of the truth. Not even Trotsky in his vehement accusations of Stalin, not even Victor Serge in his "Pamphlets," not even Boris Suvarin in his slashing critical biography of Stalin, were in complete possession of the whole truth, as it is now being revealed by the disciples and successors of Stalin.

17th Congress Cited

Let us ask ourselves one moment what the seventeenth congress of the U. S. S. R. Communist party was. It was the congress of the "victors." It was held in Moscow at the end of January, 1934. It opened with "tempestuous" applause for the central committee and for Stalin.

If one considers that the power of Stalin was not at that time what it became later with the war, it is evident that the massacres disclosed by Khrushchev involve responsibilities that were not Stalin's alone but of the whole directive apparatus. Terror, in conditions of time and place not justified by necessity, was the price paid to the suppression of all Democratic life inside the party and the state.

Some of K's [Mr. Khrushchev's] heavy ironies must have sent a current of ice through the congress delegates. For example, the phrase attributed to Bulganin: "It sometimes happens that a person is invited by Stalin as a friend and when he is before him he has no idea where he will end up, whether at home or in prison."

Suspicion of Voroshilov

Or "Stalin occupied himself with the absurd and ridiculous suspicion that Voroshilov was a British agent. A special interception system was installed in Voroshilov's house to hear everything that was said." Again (after a reference to Stalin's criticisms of Molotov and Mikoyan at the nineteenth congress): "It cannot be excluded that Comrades Molotov and Mikoyan would have pronounced no speeches at this congress if Stalin had remained alive a few months more."

At last the final rally, which was intended to be a justification for K and the other members of the Politburo: "Stalin obviously had a plan to eliminate the old members of the Politburo."

At this point K answers the questions that must have been in the air: "Where were the members of the political office of the Central Committee? Why did not they react in time to the cult of the personality? Why do they only react now?" The answer is "the members of the political office saw these

problems in a different way at different times."

Central Committee Scored

And this answer may be valid in a strictly personal sense. It is not valid for the Central Committee on the Bolshevik party. It is not valid for the Politburo. There is no doubt that the facts cited by Khrushchev, and on which world opinion now awaits proper documentation, must have placed the members of the political office in a very difficult situation. But they had been placed in posts of responsibility precisely for this purpose, precisely to face difficult situations.

From the revelations of K we learn that the guest of the Kremlin appears to have been practically a maniac who, like the figure of the dictator in which Charlie Chaplin portrayed Hitler, "drew plans on a map of the world."

K cannot contain his laughter at and contempt for Stalin's military genius. Of the historical and military films of Stalin he says that "they make us sick." The snag is that on those films, on those books, on those poems there was organized the most vast propaganda host in the memory of the world.

One of the main results of the K report is the fact that the polemic on the cult of personality no longer makes sense, and the fact that it was Stalin who imposed the glorification of his own person becomes entirely secondary, as does the fact that he himself wrote the most laudatory phrases in his biography, on which the Communists of the whole world have fed, and the fact that he was never sated by hyper-laudatory adjectives, anthems, and gifts.

The Rapporteur has pointed out the difference between the premise—the criticism of the

cult of the myth—and the conclusion—the demolition of the action of a man who for thirty years personified the Communist revolution. And the question has been asked, at the end of his report: "But how was all this possible? Stalin was at the head of the party and of the country for thirty years and in the course of his life many battle have been won."

Can we deny it? If we deny it.

Progress of Soviet Union

He knows, better than we do, the progress that the Soviet Union had made in the past thirty years, winning the battle of industrialization, winning the battle of education, winning the war, becoming the second country in the world in production, and equalling the United States in the field of scientific experiment and especially of nuclear physics.

"The socialist revolution," he declares, "has been realized by the working class and by the poor peasant with the partial help of the middle-class of peasant. It has been a conquest of the people guided by the Bolsheviks." After this, evidently, we can return to the original question: Who then guided the Bolsheviks, in view of the fact that their congresses, their Central Committee, their Politburo, the Soviets, little by little, had allowed themselves to be stripped over twenty years of their prerogatives of control, and of their right of initiative?

The K report lacks any kind of Marxist analysis of Soviet society, any historical reconstruction of the moment in which, under the influence of determinate objective or subjective relations all power was transferred into the hands of Stalin. There is a list of facts, of "shameful facts" as K calls them.

An attempt is not even made to answer the question: "How and why could these things come to pass?" It was known that the dictatorship of the Proletariat had been changed into a dictatorship of the Communist party.

We learn that the dictatorship of the Communist party had become the personal dictatorship of Stalin. We are not told either how or why this could happen. We do not even know how the Soviet ruling group has arrived at its conclusions, whether it is in agreement, or divided, and if so on what, and why.

Uncertainty on Remedies

A similar uncertainty manifests itself in the K report as soon as the Rapporteur deals with the question of remedies. He points out three:

1. Condemn and uproot in the Bolshevik manner the cult of personality as an element extraneous to Marxism-Leninism. Combat intransigently all attempts at restoration of the situation under any form whatsoever. Restore and strengthen the application of the principles of the

Marxist-Leninist doctrine of the people as the creators of history and of all the material and spiritual benefits of humanity, the doctrine of the decisive function of the Marxist party in the revolutionary struggle for the transformation of society and of the victory of communism.

2. Continue systematically and effectively the work carried out by the Central Committee in the last few years.

3. Restore in full the Leninist principles of Socialist Soviet democracy with the object of combating the arbitrary conduct of individuals who abuse their power.

Fine declarations which, when Stalin was alive, were made a hundred times by Stalin and other Soviet leaders. The collective direction of the Politburo or of the Central Committee would certainly be preferable to the direction of one man, but if in the collective direction of the Politburo or of the Central Committee there is progress compared to personal direction, illuminated or tyrannical as it may be, there is nevertheless no guarantee of democratic life.

Political Liberty Stressed

Now the whole problem of Soviet society—the whole problem of the popular democracies that have followed in the footsteps of Soviet society—is reduced to the necessity for internal democratization, for the circulation of ideas, in a word for political liberty, a necessity which has lain below the surface of Soviet society for many years.

It is substantially a question of eliminating in the state, in the laws, and above all in custom, all the surviving instructions of the communism of war, of creating means and instruments for the formation of the free political initiative of the citizen, without there hanging over his head the accusation of being an enemy of the people, a deviationist, a saboteur every time he tries to give weight, in dealings with public authority, to his own personal and independent evaluation of the path to be followed. In this sense the Soviet crisis covers not only the so-called errors of Stalin, but the Soviet system, as it has been taken shape under the influence of factors which are in process of rapid transformation, until they appear completely reversed with respect to the preceding situation.

Avanti, 14 June

Our italicized article of yesterday /13 June article in Avanti/ "From the shock to the comic strips," dealing with the Khrushchev secret report, and the true or false "top secret" reports has provoked many, and completely contrary, reactions from the press. We can forget Il Messaggero /pro-Government Rome daily/, and Il Giornale d'Italia /pro-Government daily published in Rome/, who interpret our piece as a defense of Stalin, or a solicitation to bury the past. Either they haven't understood anything, or they have simulated ignorance. It surprises us (but not too greatly) that the Messaggero interpretation is echoed in full by La Giustizia /Saragat Socialist daily of Rome/, while La Voce Repubblicana /Rome daily of the Italian Republican Party/ bluntly views our article as "without scruples," and of a party "which places itself in the psychological position of being led by the Italian Communist Party in the interpretation of the Soviet events."

The fact is, we do not wish to defend Stalin nor cover up his mistakes and faults with a compassionate veil. On the contrary, the first secret report of Khrushchev leaves us perplexed by a basic imbalance, between the portion which criticizes the man, the personality cult, power abuse, the political and military errors of Stalin (a courageous and just critique in many aspects); and the part concerning the environment, the historical moment, the objective and subjective conditions of the class struggle, which is completely inadequate or even lacking. Vainly, in the lengthy report the reader seeks an answer to why and how so many errors and crimes were committed. An unclear distinction, between the communist system and its practical operations results in Stalin being raised to the symbolic value which Maligno has in certain mystic works, in which the author provides the words and the reader construes the meaning.

An act of courage and clarification cannot halt midway; critical analysis cannot be one sided if one wishes to be politically constructive and pedagogically correct. It should not leave doubts as to the motivation and the aims that one preestablishes. And the Khrushchev report (at least the version we know), is inadequate, precisely because it lacks a full assumption of responsibility for the criticism," even if the report is considered as an integral part of the overall happenings and debates at the 20th Congress.

As to the "top secret" report, be it true or false, we can do no more than repeat what was said yesterday. Either France Soir and the journalistic agencies are overstepping the bounds, or whoever prepared and distributed the report is passing the limits /i.e. of common decency/. In the long run the only one to profit from such material would be Stalin, the idol whom they wish to demolish: and this does not help the presumed manipulators, or the presumed authors of the "top secret" report.

FRANCE

L'Humanite, Statement of the Politburo of the French Communist Party on Khrushchev Report, 19 June

The bourgeois press has published a report attributed to Comrade Khrushchev. This report, which adds to Stalin's already known errors, statements of other grave mistakes committed by him, justifiably provokes high feelings among the members of the French Communist Party.

The French Communists, as do the Communists of all countries, denounce the arbitrary acts of which Stalin is accused and which are contrary to the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

The effort of the leaders of the CPSU to undertake the correction of the errors connected with the cult of the individual emphasizes the strength and unity of the great party of Lenin, the confidence which it enjoys among the Soviet peoples, and its authority in the international labor movement.

However, the Politburo regrets that because of the conditions under which Comrade Khrushchev's report was presented, the bourgeois press was in a position to publish facts of which the French Communists had been unaware. Such a situation is not favorable to normal discussion of these problems within the party. It facilitates, on the contrary, speculations and maneuvers on the part of the enemies of Communism.

The explanations given up to now of Stalin's errors, their origin, and the conditions under which they developed, are not satisfactory. A thorough Marxist analysis to determine all the circumstances under which Stalin was able to exercise his personal power is indispensable.

It was wrong, while Stalin was still living, to shower him with dithyrambic praise and to give him the exclusive credit for all the successes in the Soviet Union which were due to a correct general policy in the construction of Socialism. This attitude contributed to the development of the cult of the individual and negatively influenced the international labor movement. Today, it is wrong to blame Stalin alone for every negative act of the CPSU.

Stalin played a positive role in a whole historic period. With the other leaders of the party, he took an active part in the October Socialist Revolution, then in the victorious struggle against foreign intervention and counterrevolution. After the death of Lenin, he fought against the adversaries of Marxism-Leninism and for the application of the Leninist plan for the edification of Socialism. He contributed in great measure to the formation of all the Communist Parties.

Stalin acquired a deserved prestige which he allowed to develop into the cult of the individual. The development of this cult was facilitated by the position of the Soviet Union, for a long time exposed alone to the undertakings of a world of enemies. This necessitated an extreme test of the people's strength, an iron discipline, and strict centralization of power of the proletarian State. These circumstances help to explain the enormous difficulties which the Soviet Union had to face, without justifying Stalin's activities, however. He committed a number of violations of Soviet law; he carried out arbitrary repressive measures against militant Communists; he transgressed the party principles, and, using condemnable methods, he did great harm to the Soviet Union and to the international Communist movement.

The 20th Congress of the CPSU, during which Stalin's errors were justifiably denounced, was the congress of the brilliant balance sheet of the Soviet Union, which, having achieved the construction of Socialism, has started on the road to a Communist society. It was the congress of great victories on the part of the countries in the socialist camp. It emphasized the possibility of avoiding wars in our lifetime and of achieving Socialism by new means. It brightened the prospects of the working class's march to unity.

In order that all militants, in preparation for the 14th Congress of the French Communist Party, can profitably discuss the problems raised by Comrad Khrushchev's report, the Politburo has asked the Central Committee of the CPSU for the text of this report with which the members of certain Communist and workers parties are already familiar.

Faithful to the principles of Marxism-Leninism, aware of the prominent role of the Soviet people, pioneers of Socialism, and in close solidarity with the CPSU, the French Communist Party will do everything in its power to make unity of action of the working class a reality, in order to advance toward a new Popular Front and a socialistic France.

Le Monde, 19 June

"Le Monde today concludes the publication of Khrushchev's secret report on the cult of the individual. The document is, as our readers will have determined, a most important one for understanding of these times, and, without doubt, one of the most extraordinary texts in the history of humanit

Certainly, many of the facts that it contains were already known in the West. It was known that Stalin had massacred hundreds of Bolsheviks from his first hour, and tens of thousands of adversaries of the Revolution, that he had ignored the warnings of those who announced Nazi aggression, that during the war he deported entire populations because they could have helped the invader. No free mind could have accepted the fables invented to justify the denunciation of Tito, the trials of Rajk, Kostov, or Slansky, or the "doctors plot." But, throughout the world, the Communist leaders had denied the evidence en masse and heaped abuses on everyone who questioned the profound goodness and infallibility of the "genial father of the people." Millions of credulous militants, believing in the words of their leaders, remained impervious to the slightest doubt.

Today it is Khrushchev himself, in a document whose authenticity has been questioned by no one to date, who presents the monstrous account of the crimes and madness of his predecessor. The minimum effect of the reading of the report on men who yesterday fought with simple faith, should be to lessen the attention they pay in the future to the objections and reports of those who do not share their conviction.

But is it not their entire "credo" which is shaken? Marxism was to free man from all dissensions; it has resorted in the tyranny of a new Peter the Great, more worried, as are so many dictators, about the power of the State and his own glory than about the good of his people. Is not Khrushchev attaching to the individual an importance which the classics of scientific socialism dispute when he so vehemently denounces the cult of the individual?

To the extreme uneasiness of the Communists, of which Togliatti's interview and Thorez's silence are examples, there must be a corresponding uneasiness on the part of those who are not Communists. Those who hoped that, with

the elimination of Stalin and with his posthumous denunciation, the era of arbitrary actions and terror would come to an end, cannot, after reading the report, feel at all reassured. What is denounced in the report is the abuse of violence, not the principle of its use. And the constant references to Lenin, the use of the word "enemy" to refer to the outside world, remind us that the Kremlin's present leaders have given up no part of their dream of world revolution. The successes achieved by the USSR during the past 20 years, often thanks to war, and thanks, in any case, to a superior efficiency in totalitarian methods, are of such a magnitude that they easily hide, in the eyes of the Soviet leaders, the important philosophical failure that the Khrushchev report reveals.

But whatever one thinks of this failure and of the dreams of the new masters of old Russia, the fact remains that they have in their control, whether directly or indirectly, a billion human beings, and that their influence, little by little, is reaching into Asia and the Middle East. The western leaders, who formerly hoped to win out over this vast empire by their superior numbers alone, now realize the futility of their dreams. We are sentenced to live side by side.

Above and beyond the ideological considerations, the evolution which everyone can see in the Soviet system already has led to a certain interpenetration of the two worlds. The development of this interpenetration is the only chance of a real liberalization of the Moscow regime, and in the long run, of a reconciliation of the two systems over which humanity is quarreling. It is for this reason that man, whatever his opinions and whatever distrust he has the right to feel, must play the game of relaxation to the utmost.

DENMARK

Land og Folk (Communist), 7 June

The other day, Land og Folk printed the version of of Khrushchev's speech to the closed meeting of the 20th congress published by the American State Department. It contained nothing new of significance beyond what had been already learned from various Soviet sources. But the interest of American propaganda in stressing this [the contents of the State Department version?] is not surprising.

We can, of course, not guarantee the reliability of the details thus made known, but this much is incontrovertible--that under the strain of the Soviet people's struggle to gain victory for socialism, very serious mistakes have been made. We regard it as completely correct, however, that these mistakes are brought into the open.

As the central committee of our party has already said, the occurrence of serious errors of judgment can only be a very painful thing for all Communists. In the truly Communist view, such occurrences must without reservation be condemned as foreign to socialism.

All this, however, is only one side of the truth. The professional blackeners of the Soviet Union and of socialism who now beat their drums, do so without the slightest justification. In the first place, what is taking place is that the errors are being dealt with. And in the second place, it is constantly becoming clear to more people that the stupid and unrestrained smear campaign against the Soviet Union which for years has been "comme il faut" is untenable and untrue.

Why, for example, was the Folketing delegation so positively astonished at many of the things they saw in the USSR? Why did their natural approval of incontrovertible facts give rise to such angry condemnation in the reactionary press? Why does the NATO council itself acknowledge the tenability of Soviet development plans? Churchill even says that the economic progress in the Soviet Union is going forward at a greater pace than claimed by the USSR itself.

Despite desperate attempts to revive the cold war, relaxation of tensions is gaining ground. At the present, the socialistic discussion in the Labor movement is becoming more lively. Under these conditions, is it not necessary to discuss the socialistic experiences of the Soviet Union in a more calm and judicial manner?

We do not doubt that such a discussion, in which both positive and negative factors are taken into consideration and seen in their true relationships, will strengthen the cause of both peace and socialism. Is this, perhaps, why others wish to avoid this discussion?

NORWAY

Friheten (Communist) 8 June

The American State Department has during the past few days started a violent campaign in connection with the publication of the speech made by Khrushchev to a closed meeting of the Congress of the CPSU.

In one way or another, the Americans have obtained the text, or rather parts of the text, of the speech.

And now this text is published all over the world in the most sensational forms. The intention is obvious. The US government is attempting in every conceivable way to stiffen the hard front against the socialist world, which front was built up during the days of the cold war.

This attitude is necessary in order to maintain NATO, SEATO, and the other aggressive alliances in their old, rigid forms. This is necessary so that the US will be able to maintain its "leading role," i.e., maintain its sway over the capitalistic world, and hold this world together under American leadership. And since arguments no longer serve the purpose, fear is employed. The atmosphere of fear is the condition in which the rulers of the US feel most at home.

It is clear that the text of Khrushchev's speech will both frighten and shock those who read it. The speech was made on the next to the last day of the Congress. In the previous nine days, the Congress had dealt with a number of problems essential to the development of the Soviet Union. The Congress asserted that the transition process from capitalism to socialism had been completed, and that the country had advanced a long way toward the next stage, Communism. This had been accomplished thanks to the fact that in these basic problems, a correct political line had been followed, that the problems had been correctly solved, and that the incorrect political offensives of the groups of the Right and of the Left had been repulsed.

During the whole period since 1917, including the time when Stalin played such a dominating role in the Party and

the government, this program has been carried forward by the CPSU. And during all this time, the great efforts of Soviet workers and peasants in the cause of socialism have guaranteed the realization of this program.

The Congress also spent several days planning the solution of future tasks. It set goals greater and more epoch-making than ever before, goals which mean a new era for the whole socialist development.

But at the same time, the Congress was faced with the task of settling with the past, settling with grave errors and shortcomings. And if the great results and achievements made in the Soviet Union are closely connected with the person of Stalin, so are the errors and shortcomings, to a high degree. The contents of Khrushchev's speech is a complete demonstration of this.

Shocking things have occurred in the Soviet Union. For years they have been hidden, both from the Soviet public, and from the international public. Conditions which entailed the most manifest breaches of the principles obtaining for a socialist state, and which carried with them breaches of the laws and rules of this state, had gradually arisen. These conditions hit primarily the leading cadre of the Communist Party, and therefore prevented the development of important, positive forces in the country.

Stalin, with his willful practices, must assume much of the guilt for the development of these conditions. But it is plainly indicated in Khrushchev's speech that these conditions were exploited by elements which had entrenched themselves in important positions, and who in their whole attitude and work showed that they were bitter enemies of socialistic development.

In his speech, Khrushchev painted a rough picture of these dark events in the history of the Soviet Union. But the manner in which these things were presented shows that the Congress was an effort to finally and definitely put an end to these conditions.

We have previously discussed the reasons why such things did happen, or could happen. These were the complex of circumstances arising from the heritage of tsarism and from the strained situation in which the Soviet Union found itself

when it had to solve problems which meant life or death to the whole Soviet state and the building up of socialism.

For Communists all over the world it comes as a severe blow that these things could happen, and that the condition could last as long as it did.

It teaches us, first and foremost, that during future work in the cause of socialism, some facets of political development in the socialist state must be watched and guarded in a far different manner from that which has hitherto been in use. Further, it teaches us that in the Communist party it is the duty of all members always to be on guard against even the slightest tendency toward slackness or breaches of Party principles concerning democracy and collective leadership.

The great results Khrushchev was able to present to the Congress in his first report, and Bulganin's speech concerning the new Five-Year Plan, show what can and has been gained by following the road of socialism. The last report by Khrushchev at the closed meetings shows the things which at any cost must be avoided in the building and the struggle for socialism. Together, these reports and the way the Congress dealt with them are a basic settlement with one period of development and a transition to a new period. In sum, they mean a new era for the whole socialistic world, and thus also for all of humanity.

The supporters of capitalism who are now seeking to exploit the settlement with the past which the Communists of the Soviet Union have undertaken, do so in order to maintain and make more severe the conflicts in the world, and to maintain the "iron curtain" and the atmosphere of the cold war and the hot war.

In the long run, they will not succeed. The forces of socialism are so superior that the socialist world will surmount the painful process which the settlement has been, and, sounder and stronger, proceed to the solution of its new tasks.

BELGIUM

Le Drapeau Rouge (Communist), 19 June

The criticisms addressed to Stalin by the 20th Congress of the CPSU have deeply moved Communists in the entire world.

We have already said that.

At the time of the 20th Congress, our newspaper dedicated a series of articles to the problems raised.

However, they did not encompass all the issues.

That was impossible because we were ignorant of a number of facts.

But even without awaiting these [Facts], the reactionary press has joyfully devoted itself to printing all kinds of slander and insults with the obvious aim of concealing the victories gained by the Soviet peoples on the path of Communist enlightenment.

Going even further, they have now begun predicting-- particularly concerning Belgium--the decline and disappearance of Communism....

However the fact that 10,000 Borinage miners went on strike two weeks ago against the closing of their coal mines has sufficed for these same persons to demand that the Communists admit they are the organizers of this labor action.

For persons "reduced to the simplest expression," as Le Soir [independent Brussels daily] labeled the Communists last Sunday [17 June], the least that can be said is that their enemies acknowledge they have a "little bit" of influence left in certain fields.

As for the gossip writer of Le Peuple [official Belgian Socialist organ], he ventured to say last Sunday, "When we denounced the tyranny of Stalin several years ago, the Belgian Communists accused us of spreading 'anti-labor' slander."

However, several years ago this gossip writer actually wrote a pamphlet glorifying Stalin, whom he compared with

In the USSR first of all, where millions of human beings are now replacing the cult of personality, however great the personality has been. And where the victories gained in the past will now multiply in an impetuous tempo. It has been written in the annals of history that ancient Russia, feudal and tragically backward, will be the greatest power in the world, in all its dominions.

In the still-capitalist world also, where such honestly-conducted discussions will raise the level of the political conscience of the workers, the confidence in their strength and in their potentials will be affirmed.

Decline of Communism, especially in Belgium? Let us see! Has capitalism been destroyed here? Do the Societe Generale and other trusts no longer spread their monstrous tentacles into the entire economic life of the nation? Does the owner, in all branches of industry, not push more feverishly to accentuate the tempo of exploitation of the workers? Does he no longer refuse to improve social security decisively? Has he agreed to support the expenses of the old-age pensions better?

No!

Then Communism will remain in the soul of just and good men, who are revolted by arbitrary actions. It will above all remain in the soul of those whom capitalism exploits most ferociously, the workers.

Moreover, it is not the first time in history that our party has been declared dead, if not already buried.

However, it will always be there, because the working class--without which it cannot live--will always be there. And it needs men who are completely devoted to its cause. The Communists are not the only ones? That is possible. But they are. And their contribution to the common cause is not small: they are the only ones to have led several working classes to victory already.

Errors and mistakes, grave errors and great mistakes have been committed on the victorious path, but the path has been surmounted despite them. For it must not be forgotten that in the USSR there are no longer persons who amass fabulous wealth by exploiting the work of others!

Antaeus, hero of Greek mythology. In fact, he only denounced one thing: the rule in our Communist party which provides that a militant paid by the party never may receive higher compensation than the average salary of a worker. That is why the Communists had to part company with him, and for no other reason.

That it was believed that a militant worker could remain a militant completely devoted to the interests of the workers while enjoying material advantages incomparably superior to those of the workers, is obviously his business as well as that of his new employers.

But this does not give him the right to judge the Communists, nor the mistakes which they can make, nor the way in which they correct these mistakes, nor the lessons which such mistakes entail, nor, above all, of presenting himself as a person seeing more clearly than the others.

Let us therefore leave the reactionary enemy to his anti-Communist worries. And let us also leave the turncoats to their throbbing desire of finding more honorable justifications for abandoning the cause than the real reasons which are infinitely less pretty.

If then the Communists cannot count on their enemies to enlighten them it is not less true that they have the worry of being clear-sighted themselves. And of being clear-sighted in a situation which allowed three great mistakes to have been made by a man who symbolized his country--the USSR--and his ideology--Communism.

This means that in order to be clear-sighted, the Communists cannot count on any but their own efforts. And on those of workers whose only reason for existence is to serve the common interest.

In this sense the interview of Comrade Togliatti, secretary general of the Italian Communist Party, which Le Drapeau Rouge begins publishing today, constitutes a real contribution to an understanding of the problems posed.

There is no doubt that there will be others, on our part as well as on the part of our friends throughout the world.

During these discussions and at their end, great victories will be gained. Not only in the field of revolutionary theory, but in every-day events.

THE NETHERLANDS

De Waarheid (Communist), 7 June

Foster Dulles certainly does not hesitate to prove that his "version" of Khrushchev's speech is a falsification and that the publication of the speech in the US is merely contributing to the Cold War.

The first incident which proves that the report is a falsification occurred when the US State Department indicated in a diffident statement that it did not vouch for the report's reliability; the second, when London refused to publish the fabricated report; and the third, when it was announced that the falsified report is being broadcast to the USSR over 130 transmitters.

The latter tops them all. The actual speech delivered by Khrushchev is known in the entire USSR and has been discussed by Communist and non-Communist Party members in thousands of meetings. At present, the Soviet people need Mr. Dulles even less than before for their enlightenment,

The objective of broadcasting falsified statements can, therefore, merely be for the purpose of creating confusion and distrust, increasing the Cold War, and straining relations between the USSR and the US. Indeed, when the US peacemakers show their real characters, there are not so many nice things to see.

And to think that they are the ones that lay down the law here and at whose command all kinds of party leaders, journalists, and important people jump to attention! Is it any wonder that many people are turning to the Communist Party because they believe that some things must change?

LUXEMBOURG

Zeitung (Communist) 6 June

Washington -- Press reports announce that the speech, which the First Secretary allegedly made at a secret meeting of the CPSU, is in the hands of the US State Department. The speech is said to be stronger than originally had been thought. The State Department, however, allows that it is not quite sure whether this is Khrushchev's authentic speech. It is not impossible, therefore, that it is a doctored text which was published just at a time when the eyes of the whole world are directed toward Moscow because of Tito's visit to the USSR.

UNITED STATES

N.Y. Times

JUN 25 1956

Text of U. S. Communist Party's Statement

Following is the text of a statement issued by the Communist party of the United States here yesterday on the new policy of the Soviet Union toward Stalin:

The publication of the State Department's text of Khrushchev's speech to a closed session of the twentieth Congress of the C. P. S. U. [Communist Party of the Soviet Union] has given a fresh impetus to the already widespread discussions in our country about the changes taking place in the Soviet Union.

The State Department would like Americans to believe that nothing has changed in the Soviet Union. It hopes to cancel out the positive impact of the Twentieth Congress, which registered, among other things, a new relationship of world forces, opening up for the first time in history the real prospect for a lasting peace. It hopes in this way to keep alive the disintegrating remnants of the cold war.

However, the people of our country who desire peaceful co-existence cannot but welcome the actions taken by the Soviet Government since Stalin's death as well as the determination expressed in Khrushchev's speech to end the brutalities and injustices which marred a period of Soviet life.

The State Department wants the American people to believe that the tragedies, crimes and injustices which took place during the Stalin era are evils which are inherent in socialism.

But the crimes against innocent people perpetrated under Stalin's leadership are, in fact,

alien to socialism. They were an intolerable hindrance to the advance of socialism. Socialism is dedicated to the liberation of

man from social injustice and to releasing the full capacities for the flowering of humanity. It requires an ever-expanding democracy, the growth of human freedom and personal liberties, the development of conditions which will ultimately eliminate altogether the use of force in the relations between people.

'Proud Supporters' of Soviet

We have been and will continue to be the proud supporters of socialism everywhere. We have fought and will continue to fight against the efforts of big business to calumniate and vilify the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

We Communists know that socialism must eradicate the inhumanity of capitalist society. That is why we, above all, are deeply shocked by the revelations contained in Khrushchev's speech.

In our opinion this speech should have been made public by the CPSU itself. We do not share the view that the questions dealt with, no matter how painful and abhorrent, are exclusively the internal affair of the CPSU. The role which the Soviet Union has played in world affairs for the last forty years, and the defense of its socialist achievements by workers in the U. S. and other countries have made these matters public issues everywhere.

A basic analysis of how such perversions of socialist democ-

racy, justice and internationalism were permitted to develop and continue unchecked for twenty years must still be made by the leadership of the CPSU. It needs also to be made by Marxists everywhere. Khrushchev's contribution to the exposure of mistakes and to

the process of correction now going on, makes only a beginning in this direction.

Reject Soviet Analysis

We cannot accept an analysis of such profound mistakes which attributes them solely to the capricious aberrations of a single individual, no matter how much arbitrary power he was wrongly permitted to usurp. It is just as wrong to ascribe all the mistakes and violations of socialist principles to a single individual as it was to ascribe to him all the achievements and grandeur of socialist progress in the U. S. S. R.

In our opinion the mistakes made were primarily a result of wrong policies and concepts arising, in part, out of the fact that the Soviet Union was the pioneering land of socialism and was surrounded for decades by a hostile capitalist world. Some of these policies and concepts have already been repudiated. But the historic objective factors associated with these errors need to be more fully assessed. Also required is a further and deeper examination of such questions as the structure and operation of socialist democracy in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries as well as of the new problems and perspectives arising as the workers of other lands move toward socialism. This will illuminate the source of past errors and help avoid future ones.

We are deeply disturbed by facts revealed in information coming from Poland that organs and media of Jewish culture were summarily dissolved and a number of their leaders executed. This is contrary to

the Soviet Union's historic contributions on the Jewish question. Khrushchev's failures to deal with these outrages, and

the continuing silence of Soviet leaders, requires an explanation.

The Communist party of the U. S. has some serious conclusions to draw from all this. For we are responsible to the working class and people of our own country. And to them we admit frankly that we uncritically justified many foreign and domestic policies of the Soviet Union which are now shown to be wrong.

We have begun to re-examine our previously oversimplified and wrong concept of the relations which should exist between the Marxists of various countries, including the socialist countries. These relations must be based on the principles of serving the best national interests of each people and the common interests of all progressive humanity; of the equality of parties; of the right and duty of the Marxists of all countries to engage in friendly criticism of the theory or practice of the Marxists of any country, whenever they feel this is necessary. Far from weakening, this will strengthen international working class solidarity. This new approach was reflected in the DW [The Daily Worker] as early as last March, as well as in the position adopted by the national committee at the end of April.

Our stand is rooted in the primary concern of our party for the present and future welfare of the American people. As an independent Marxist party of American workers dedicated to socialism, we seek to add our influence to ensuring friendship of peoples and world peace. We shall continue to work for greater economic security, democracy, and civil rights in our own country, and for unity with all socialist-minded groups to attain socialism by constitutional, peaceful means, expressing the free choice of the majority of the American people.

Daily Worker, New York, Tuesday, June 26, 1956

AN HISTORIC STATEMENT

WE ARE CONFIDENT the overwhelming majority of our readers join us in greeting the statement of the National Committee of the Communist Party on the Khrushchev speech.

In our opinion this is an historic statement in the life not only of the Communist Party of the United States but of the general socialist movement in our country.

The National Committee, in its statement, outlines its attitude to the basic task of building an independent American socialist movement, its attitude to the existing socialist countries and its attitude to Communist parties throughout the world. Such a statement is important not only for American Communists and friends of the Communist Party. It is important too for all Americans, for whom the issue of co-existence and peaceful competition between capitalist and socialist countries is an urgent one right now, and for whom the question of changes in American society will become more and more urgent in the future.

Many newspapers are aware of the impact the statement is bound to make and they are already trying to undercut it. One line of attack is that the Communist Party "is adding its voice," as the New York Times puts it, to those of other parties. But as the statement itself points out and as the Times itself says elsewhere, Marxists began to outline in the Daily Worker a new approach as far back as the middle of March, and at its four-day meeting at the end of April the National Committee of the Communist Party called for a new look at its relations with the countries of socialism and with other Communist parties.

The main line of attack, however, upon the American and other Communist parties goes like this: Their statements "must be regarded as hypocritical and unacceptable" (N. Y. Times) because they "have not given up their goal of dictatorship, the root institution from which Stalin's and his colleagues' crimes arose"; and that the Communists have not "understood that full democracy and right of dissent are essentials for any tolerable human society."

Let's leave aside just how full is "full democracy" under capitalism and just how sacred is the right of dissent. Let's leave aside the shameful record of the New

York Times on these fundamental principles at nearly a critical moment such as the Smith Act arrests. But the fact remains that the National Committee statement calls for a thorough examination of just these questions in relation to socialism.

"Also required," says the statement, "is a further and deeper examination of such questions as the structure and operation of socialist democracy in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries as well as of the new problems and perspectives arising as the workers of other lands move toward socialism. This will illuminate the source of past errors and help avoid future ones."

Changes are already under way in the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. These changes may not be fast enough, but one thing we can say with complete assurance: socialism in America will differ from the specific Russian conditions of socialism in the Soviet Union. It will also seek to avoid the mistakes of that epoch-making experience and will be a democratic socialism—democratic in the fullest sense of the word and far exceeding the rights won by the people under capitalism in our country.

N.Y. Times

JUN 23 1956

THE COMMUNIST CRISIS

A moral and political crisis of the first magnitude is obviously engulfing the Communist parties of the free world. In this country, Britain, France, Italy and elsewhere, publication of Nikita S. Khrushchev's attack on Stalin has had an unprecedented impact. From the highest leader of world communism, Communists the world over have now been told, in effect, that what the "bourgeois" press said about Stalin for a quarter of a century was the unvarnished truth, and what the Communist press said about him was completely false. Instead of being the greatest, kindest and wisest man in history, Stalin was a murderer, a sadist, and a paranoid.

The Communist shock has been particularly great because of the peculiarly distorted self-picture many Communists have had of themselves. Sincere ones among them have believed they were striving for the highest ideals of humanity. They have believed also that they had a unique weapon, the key to history, in the "scientific socialism" of Marx, which enabled them, so they thought, not only to understand the present but precisely to forecast the future. Now they have learned that for a quarter of a century and more they were subservient to a homicidal maniac. They are learning, too, that they have been political illiterates who were duped because they refused to see what was plainly before their eyes.

For such leaders as Togliatti, Troz and others the problem now presented is particularly acute. Un-

like Khrushchev, they cannot claim that they live under Stalin's terror and feared to, they live if they spoke out. On the contrary, they lived in free societies where the truth was abundantly available, and yet they led the chorus of deification for the monster.

It is against this background that the present indignation and questioning of free world Communist leaders must be judged. Each is apparently trying to save his own position and to preserve both his power and his movement. It is for this purpose that they call on Khrushchev to explain his own and his colleague's role in Stalin's crimes. Even more ludicrous is their demand for a "Marxist explanation" of what happened.

While Stalin lived these same leaders made a mockery of their own Marxism by groveling before Stalin and paying no attention to the economic and political realities of the Soviet Union. When, two decades ago, Trotsky offered them a Marxist explanation in terms of the bureaucratic perversion of the Soviet Union into a new differentiated, class state, these leaders paid no attention. Today they want a "Marxist explanation," as though the reality were not plain to any person with common sense, let alone a knowledge of dialectical materialism.

The danger, of course, is that the Communist leaders and their parties may be able to rescue themselves from the obvious political and moral bankruptcy in which they now find themselves. By pretending to turn on Stalin and Khrushchev, they may convince some that they are no

longer tools of Moscow. Their present breast-beating and cries of indignation may, in fact, turn out to be nothing more than a maneuver designed to further the present

united front tactic. That tactic, we may recall, was used also under Stalin two decades ago, and is a standard weapon in the Stalinist armory.

The fact is that Stalin was as much a product as a creator of the Soviet system. Once one embraces the doctrine of dictatorship, once one believes one knows the "inevitable" path of history and has the right to destroy all who hold contrary views, the kind of corruption that was Stalinism becomes inevitable. As Secretary Dulles said Thursday, the Soviet system has now proved that "it is a system of inevitable abuses which provides no dependable means for the correction of these abuses." Not until Communists have understood that full democracy and right of dissent are essentials for any tolerable human society can it be said that they have learned the real lesson of the infamous Stalin era.

For us of the free world the task is now to use the Khrushchev revelations as a weapon with which to destroy the prestige and influence of the Communist movement and to divert the legitimate social protest which it has captured in some countries into constructive, democratic channels. Khrushchev did not want his speech printed because "We should not give ammunition to the enemy." Now that the free world has this ammunition, we must use it, and use it well.

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FERMENT ON THE LEFT

An unprecedented "agonizing reappraisal" is now going on everywhere within the Communist parties of the free world and among those who have sympathized and worked with them. In the latter category no figure has been more important this past decade than Pietro Nenni, leader of the Italian Socialist party, which has worked hand in glove with the Italian Communist party. Now, basing himself upon the partial text of Khrushchev's anti-Stalin speech released by the State Department, Mr. Nenni has belatedly joined the world call for an honest explanation from Stalin's former colleagues and present successors. And he calls for "political liberty" in the Soviet Union, a truly revolutionary demand to pose before a naked dictatorship.

The need for the present painful Communist and fellow-traveler soul searching arises from a cardinal fact. Over the past several decades the factor which distinguished Communist parties from all other movements was their primary allegiance to the Soviet Union and to Stalin as the Soviet dictator. The needs of Soviet foreign policy dictated the Communist position in each country of the world. For the sake of the Soviet Union Communists of the free nations became traitors, spies and saboteurs. They did not hesitate even to embrace Hitler when Stalin and Molotov embraced him in 1939.

In all this Communists operated under the delusion that they were serving the "higher" interests of humanity. Now they must live with the shattering knowledge that they

really served only a homicidal maniac. Could their moral and political bankruptcy be more plain?

It is characteristic of the Communists' naiveté that they now demand a Marxist explanation of how Stalin's crimes could have happened. Democratic forces in the free world long ago knew and broadcast what was happening in the Soviet Union. A dictatorship had been set up there with unlimited powers of coercion and a monopoly of information and political power. This dictatorship imposed upon the Soviet people at enormous cost a gigantic transformation in every sphere of life.

Unchecked by a free press, by opposition political parties or by the other mechanisms of a democratic society, the bureaucracy which ran this dictatorship under Stalin became corrupt in every way, feathering its own nest at the expense of the people and engaging in inter-ecine rivalry for power. Khrushchev and Company were simply the most successful members of this bureaucracy, their own personal rise under Stalin being the results of their talents as bootlickers and conscienceless executors of the despot's will.

What is perhaps the most revealing about the current situation within the Soviet Union is the effort of the bureaucracy to preserve its powers and privileges. To make the dictatorship still viable the cult of Lenin is being substituted for the cult of Stalin. Free political debate is still outlawed, and those daring to go outside the permitted limits of criticism are being denounced as "Trotsky elements."

For all the sham show of a new democratic spirit, the "general line

of the party" is still beyond free public debate. The desire of the Soviet people for a better life is still held secondary to the Stalinist proposition that heavy industry must have first priority. And, most ominous for the future, the ground is being laid for the present bureaucracy to pass its power and its privileges on to its children through the institution of new boarding schools to train the "élite" of tomorrow.

Today Communists the world over are trying to convince us that they have seen the error of their ways.

They extend the hand of friendship and cooperation not only of Socialists but to every other "progressive" element in each free nation. Yet on the record so far, these overtures must be regarded as hypocritical and unacceptable.

The Communists, after all, have not given up their goal of dictatorship, the root institution from which Stalin's and his colleagues' crimes arose. They have not recognized that Stalin's foul deeds extended far beyond the Soviet borders, and that the Soviet Union was responsible and is responsible for the international tension since World War II. They have not recognized the enslavement by Stalin of Eastern Europe. Unlike Mr. Nenni now, they do not call for economic and political democracy within the Soviet Union. They still do not put their own countries' interests before those of the international Communist conspiracy.

In short, they are still Communists, tarred by the same brush as in Stalin's time, but pretending that the death of that one man has somehow fundamentally changed the rottenness of their ideology and the speciousness of their reasoning.

The New Leader
June 25 1956

TEN YEARS OF INFIGHTING

By Franz Borkenau

IT WAS Stalin's habit not to let any of his crimes go unpunished: In each case, one of his aides had to confess to Stalin's crime. Khrushchev's celebrated speech closely follows this example with only one variation: Khrushchev cannot, however much he would like to, accuse living men like Malenkov; they might be able to retaliate. Hence he puts the blame for his own crimes on three dead men, Stalin, Beria and Abakumov.

The speech is one of the most outrageous falsifications of history we have yet seen, a falsification of the purest Stalinist type. Nothing could demonstrate more clearly how little is actually behind the propaganda of de-Stalinization in Russia—at least, in contrast to one or two satellite capitals.

Stalin was, of course, the main culprit in all the crimes mentioned by Khrushchev; what is strange is how long it took Khrushchev to admit this. For during his visit to Belgrade last year he provoked Tito's displeasure by his refusal to acknowledge Stalin's role in the mass murders of Communist party leaders; it was he who turned Stalin's 76th birthday last December into a spectacular homage to the dead dictator; and it was he who at the beginning of the Party Congress came out against the cult of personality without a word against Stalin! Only Mikoyan's open disclosure of Stalin's real role, on the third day of the Party Congress, forced Khrushchev to denounce Stalin on the last day.

But what about Beria and Abakumov? There is no doubt that these top functionaries of the Russian Gestapo were also guilty of countless bloody crimes. But of these real crimes Khrushchev says nothing; and of the innumerable crimes for which he blames them, they are guilty of only one, the torture and liquidation of the "Leningrad group" led by Voznesensky in 1949-50. Apart from the dubious stories regarding random intrigues of Beria's in the Thirties, most of Khrushchev's accusations against Beria concern crimes not only in which Beria took no part but which actually aimed at his destruction.

This is true, first of all, of the scabrous affair of the Kremlin doctors. Khrushchev baldly omits the two decisive factors which make this affair comprehensible. One is the choice of the persons who conducted the "doctors' plot" investigation. They were Ryumin, shot after Stalin's death, and his boss Ignatiev, saved and reinstated with all honors by Khrushchev—Ignatiev, head of the Ministry of State Security, which Stalin had wrested from Beria's control early in 1952 and handed over to Beria's bitterest enemies. It was not for nothing that Beria saw to it immediately after Stalin's death that these people were dismissed and arrested. The second factor suppressed by Khrushchev concerns the doctors' alleged victims—those Marshals Konev, Vasilievsky, etc. who were to have appeared as special Soviet patriots, in contrast to Zhukov

and his friends, who were not to be thus honored. The supposedly threatened marshals had all been close to Stalin personally and to Zhdanov; they continue to be the mamelukes of the Army. Both the choice of the torturers and the selection of the alleged victims point to Khrushchev as the most important survivor, next to Baganin, of the group which authored this affair.

Until the publication of Khrushchev's speech, there were still people who would not recognize these connections. But now Khrushchev explicitly mentions the Zhdanovites who were shot (Voznesensky, Kusnetsov, etc.) and expressly identifies himself with them, as he had already done in his public speech at the Congress. At the time, the opponents of that group were Beria, now blamed for everything by Khrushchev, and Malenkov, who until the early Fifties was closely allied with Beria. For the time being, Khrushchev cannot openly attack Malenkov, but his speech is full of threatening innuendoes.

The political significance of Khrushchev's speech must be seen in the fact that he defends his old extremist friends of the Cominform period while heaping opprobrium on his moderate opponents of those days, that is, Beria and Malenkov. His version, in the best style of intra-Party conflicts, assigns all crimes to his enemies, every noble deed to himself. In fact, however, a see-saw struggle went on, in the course of which the warring factions nearly exterminated each other.

After World War II, Zhdanov fought his Party enemies to his last breath. When they gained the upper hand, they tortured and liquidated his followers. The "doctors' plot" hoax was the counter-move of the Party's extreme left, Khrushchev, Bulganin, Vasilievsky, later joined by Shepilov *et al.* This was to be the overture for a massacre of the moderates: Propaganda attacks *en masse* began against Beria, a somewhat more restrained campaign was initiated against Malenkov, while new clouds gathered around the head of Zhukov, who had been in trouble since 1946.

At that moment Stalin died, amid the most astonishing circumstances. At once the moderate wing gained the upper hand for a few months, to be defeated again through and after Beria's fall. Finally, today, Khrushchev, under the slogan of punishing the Beria men, seeks to obtain confessions from his imprisoned opponents by torture, in order to have them shot (like the group in Baku recently) on the strength of these confessions.

Undoubtedly, to some degree a settling of accounts is involved here between various Party leaders. But these events cannot be understood as a mere vendetta. Probably the key to Khrushchev's secret speech must be sought in the Yugoslav propaganda for the express annulment of the verdicts of *all* big show trials, at least all those after the war, and in the simultaneous demand for the pun-

ishment of *all* those responsible. This propaganda now aims primarily at the Slansky trial of 1952 in Prague, which was based on the same anti-Titoist and especially anti-Zionist inventions as the affair of the Kremlin doctors a few months later. These two affairs are not only identical in origin and aim; it seems that the Slansky people were even brought to Moscow for "treatment" to be worked over by the same Ryumin who later conducted the torture of the Kremlin doctors. This action, initiated by Stalin, was supported by Khrushchev and Bulganin. Should the revision of the show trials extend too far, those two would soon be sitting in the dock. Hence Khrushchev's sudden decision to air these matters himself, to shift the guilt from himself to the dead, especially Beria, whose death he had caused!

But there are other signs of rapidly mounting resistance to further revisions of the show trials. The Albanian Party Congress and the Czech Party Conference are telling examples: The number of confusing rumors intended to undermine Khrushchev's "revelations" is also on the increase. One wonders at so much effort.

If Khrushchev cannot resist the pressures of Mikoyan and Tito for further revisions of the legal murders, it is because he cannot do without them. Both, especially Tito, are guarantors of the good faith of the coexistence campaign. If Khrushchev now openly started shooting his op-

ponents, if he decisively said "No" to Tito, he would destroy the world's budding faith in a change in the Communist world—it would be the end of cooperation with Belgrade, Delhi and Rangoon, of the increased efforts in Paris and Rome, the wooing of Asian Socialists and Western Left Socialists.

The compromise of early 1955, which confirmed Khrushchev's leadership, rigidly limited his chances of carrying out his revolutionary domestic plans, especially with regard to the farmers. The only field where he could give full play to his aggressive tendencies was foreign policy. He thus bases his prestige and power on successes in foreign policy. For this Tito is indispensable—and Tito ruthlessly insists on redemption of his pledge, namely the revision of the show trials which was apparently promised in Belgrade and which is such a terrible threat to Khrushchev.

How will Khrushchev escape from this dilemma? We do not know. What he attempted toward the end of the Party Congress may make an impression for a while. But it is so obviously a web of lies that it can hardly be maintained for any length of time. The dead will continue to speak and the living will continue to tremble at their words, and even more at the words of those who will give voice to them. One may wonder how long it will be possible under these circumstances for Moscow to maintain the façade of unshaken leadership.

The New Leader
June 25 1956

BEHIND THE GREAT PURGE

By Boris I. Nicolaevsky

STATE DEPARTMENT publication of Nikita Khrushchev's secret report on Stalin's crimes is an event of tremendous importance.

Though Moscow does not deny the document's authenticity, the published text evidently omits a number of passages containing revelations particularly inconvenient for Stalin's successors. The State Department got the report from non-Soviet Communists in an edited form which had been circulated by the Soviet Party for the information of the "fraternal" foreign parties. Moscow's lack of confidence in Communists abroad is well known, and the document was doubtless heavily censored.

Significant omissions occur in the sections dealing with Soviet foreign policy. The document lacks details on Stalin's relations not only with Communist China but even with Yugoslavia, although Khrushchev could hardly have overlooked these in his report. It is completely silent on Stalin's bloody repressions against foreign Communists living in Russia in the 1930s, although at the time of the report various liquidated Polish, Hungarian and other Communists were being rehabilitated. At the same time, there are unquestionably deletions in some sections dealing with domestic affairs. Thus, in speaking of the Army purge Khrushchev must have mentioned, if not Marshal

Tukhachevsky, at least Generals Bluecher and Yegorov, who have now, judging from the Soviet magazine *Questions of History*, been posthumously rehabilitated.

Though we lack the full picture, what has already been released is of tremendous significance not only for the history of the Stalin era but also for an understanding of the contemporary Soviet scene. In recounting Stalin's deeds, Khrushchev, even when he names no names, illuminates many acts of his colleagues, Stalin's erstwhile "close comrades-in-arms," who were the late dictator's aides in various spheres.

The style of the report is typical of Khrushchev's major speeches. The uninformed observer gets an impression of great candor: At first glance, Khrushchev seems to be unburdening himself of everything on his mind, revealing even those facts that are personally disagreeable for him. But the apparent candor and simplicity conceal a shrewd, calculating man who knows his listeners and how to influence them, twisting facts and presenting them in a light favorable to himself.

Khrushchev's aims in this report imply a deep contradiction. He is trying to unload on Stalin personally *sole* responsibility for the most unsavory aspects of the Stalin era, especially the terror and the early defeats of

the war. At the same time, however, he is trying to justify all of the major policies of Stalinism.

Khrushchev does not attack the criminal nature of Stalin's major policies, or even his criminal methods in achieving them. He hits instead at personality disorders, at Stalin's persecution complex and megalomania in the last two decades of his life. These qualities, according to Khrushchev, transformed Stalin, who had previously rendered the Party great services, into a half-mad despot who ignored the views of the "collective leadership" and began to destroy the most faithful Party leaders.

Khrushchev says not a word about the terror which Stalin directed against the Russian people and against non-Communists. He is interested only in the persecution of Communists, in Stalin's departure from "Leninist principles" of "collective leadership." Khrushchev ignores the fact that the unbridled terror of the 1929-33 collectivization drive, which killed millions of innocent people, created the atmosphere which made the later Stalinist terror against Communists psychologically possible. Khrushchev refuses to see that the "Industrial party," Menahevik and other trials of 1930-31 prepared the way for the "big trials" of 1936-38, and that the torture in GPU prisons of agronomists, engineers, technicians, doctors

and fishery experts was a necessary prologue to Stalin's terrorist measures against the "Leningrad center" of Bukharinites, the Sverdlovsk "insurrectionary staff" of Kabakov, etc.

All the facts which Khrushchev cites deal with Stalin's persecution of Communists (or, in the sole exception of the 1953 "doctors' plot," of non-Communists whose patients were top Party leaders). And this is the key to his whole position: He would like to turn the downgrading of Stalin into an internal affair of the Communist party, admitting no "outsiders." Judging from Moscow reports, this effort is proving difficult: Khrushchev's revelations have already gone beyond the Communist party cells and become widely known at all levels of the population—in Moscow, at any rate. The facts he cited are so vivid and convincing that no amount of Party "commentary" can prevent people from drawing their own conclusions.

Khrushchev wished to strike at Stalin for his persecution of Communists: in reality, he struck a severe blow at the terrorist basis of the Soviet regime. Khrushchev was trying to prove that Party "collective leadership" is a sufficient antidote to the terrors unleashed under Stalin; in reality, he provided more than ample justification for the conclusion that Party dictatorship is the root of the evil, and that it is necessary to create representative government based on fundamental political liberties.

Most important in Khrushchev's report were the factual revelations about Stalin's crimes. Though a great deal is distorted, nevertheless these revelations—correctly interpreted—can furnish the basis for a serious history of the Stalin era.

Khrushchev revealed various aspects of Stalin's career from 1922-23, when he was sharply at odds with

the stricken Lenin, to 1953, when he personally ordered the Kremlin doctors arrested, tortured and forced to confess that they were "poisoners." But the most crucial revelations, unquestionably, concerned Stalin's activity during the "Yezhovshchina," the Great Purge of 1936-38.

In my opinion, Khrushchev's most important disclosure was his publication of the telegram sent by Stalin and Andrei Zhdanov on September 25, 1936 from Sochi on the necessity of replacing NKVD chief Henry Yagoda, who had "proved himself incapable of unmasking the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc," with Nikolai Yezhov. The telegram stressed that the NKVD "is four years behind in this matter" and added that "this is noted by all Party workers and by the majority of the representatives of the NKVD." This telegram is a fundamental document which illuminates the entire history of the *Yezhovshchina*.

The day after the telegram was sent, Yezhov's appointment was announced in a decree of the Presidium of the All-Union Central Executive Committee (published in *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, September 27, 1936), and the *Yezhovshchina* had begun. But Stalin's role in this is less important than the telegram's words that a purge was four years overdue.

Why four years, in Stalin's opinion? What happened four years before the telegram was sent, in the fall of 1932? There was a Central Committee plenum from September 28 to October 2, 1932. The official accounts spoke of reports on Soviet trade, the production of consumers' goods and the development of heavy industry. The question around which bitter struggle developed, however, was Stalin's proposal to execute the leaders of the Ryutin opposition group, who had been arrested shortly before.

This group was discussed in great detail in the famous *Letter of an Old Bolshevik*, first published in December 1936. The Ryutin group was accused of drawing up a program which, wrote the "Old Bolshevik," "occupied altogether slightly less than 200 pages; of these, more than 50 were devoted to a personal characterization of Stalin, an appraisal of his role in the Party, and an exposition of the thesis that without Stalin's removal neither the Party nor the country could regain a state of health. These pages were written very forcefully and pungently, depicting Stalin as a kind of evil genius of the Russian Revolution who, motivated by personal love of power and vengeance, had led the Revolution to the brink of the abyss."

Stalin declared that this document was a call for his murder and demanded the execution of Ryutin and other leaders of the group as terrorists. But the collegium of the NKVD asserted that it lacked the power to do this, and Stalin could not obtain a majority in the Politburo, where Sergei Kirov and Sergo Ordzhonikidze led the opposition to execution. At the September 28-October 2 plenum, the question of execution was laid aside. A week later, the Presidium of the Party's Central Control Commission (then headed by Yan Rudzutak, who also opposed execution) expelled the leaders of the Ryutin group and a number of persons connected with them (including Zinoviev and Kamenev) but sent them for various terms to concentration camps and isolators.

Stalin again raised the question of the death penalty for intra-Party oppositionists at the next plenum (January 7-12, 1933) in connection with the case of Eismont, A. P. Smirnov and others. Again, both in the Politburo and at the plenum, a solid majority was against him, led

by Kirov, Ordzhonikidze and Kuibyshev, supported by Mikhail Kalinin and Stanislav Kossior. Andrei Andreyev, Kliment Voroshilov and even Molotov took a vacillating position. Only Lazar Kaganovich stood by Stalin to the end.

Thus Stalin and Zhdanov, when they spoke in their 1936 telegram of a four-year lag, were referring to this 1932-33 dispute and were in effect demanding that executions of their intra-Party opponents begin at once.

Stalin had not been idle between October 1932 and October 1936. He had been systematically preparing the *Yezhovshchina* since the spring of 1933, when he set up a special "Secret Commission of State Security" in his personal secretariat. This commission, kept secret even from Politburo members, was headed by Alexander N. Poskrebyshchev, whom Khrushchev brushes off as Stalin's "loyal shield-bearer," but whose real role was enormous. It included Yezhov, Agranov and others. Its actual chief at all times was Stalin, closely advised in these matters by Kaganovich, who, under his guidance, worked out a new Party constitution for the 17th Party Congress. This new constitution (Khrushchev cites several of its secret points for the first time) eliminated the Central Control Commission, which had been formally independent of the Central Committee and had special rights, and created a new "special sector" in the Central Committee apparatus, which legally assumed much of the work of Poskrebyshchev's "Secret Commission of State Security."

Meanwhile, the famine of 1932-33 and Hitler's triumph in Germany led inside the Party to demands for a change not only in Stalin's intra-Party regime but in the major political line he had followed from 1928-29 on. At the 17th Party Congress, advocates of such a change held a majority—as the composition of the new Central Committee revealed. The reforms carried out in 1934-35 (the

abolition of bread-rationing cards, the elimination of "political sections" at the machine-tractor stations, and, somewhat later, the new Soviet Constitution, whose real author was Bukharin) indicate the program of this new majority, which was headed by Kirov.

Though this group had a majority in the Central Committee plenums and in the Politburo, it was hobbled by fear of a sharp conflict within the Party. Many were convinced that a split in the Party would bring a crisis which the Soviet regime could not survive. Their strategy was therefore to assume power peacefully in the Party apparatus. The key role in this was assigned to Kirov, who was to move from Leningrad to Moscow and take over the leadership of the most important sections of the Party apparatus.

Kirov was murdered in December 1934, on the eve of his departure for Moscow; the murder was organized by the "Secret Commission of State Security."

Khrushchev's remarks on the Kirov murder offer little new in content but they are important because Khrushchev said them. He confirms the mysterious circumstances surrounding the death of Borisov, Kirov's personal bodyguard (who was killed by Chekists acting on orders from Stalin's secretariat). He openly admits the existence of a number of mysterious elements in this affair and announces that a special commission has now been set up to investigate them. He leaves no doubt that the Presidium of the Central Committee, which organized this investigation, regards Stalin as responsible for Kirov's murder.

Finding himself in a minority in 1932, Stalin organized a plot against the Party majority in his personal secretariat. The murder of Kirov, organized on his orders, eliminated the most important of his foes. The *Yezhovshchina*, carried out on his orders, destroyed all those who in

one way or another were linked with the advocates of a change in the major Stalinist policy line.

The terror, of course, was not limited to the period of the *Yezhovshchina*. When Yezhov had completed his assignment, he too was sent to his doom, and the Beria period began. Its history is even less known than that of the Yezhov period. Khrushchev's report provided some valuable information about the behind-the-scenes aspects of this period, but it requires extensive analysis. Then came the last years of Stalin's life, characterized by bitter squabbles between Beria, who at the end lost Stalin's confidence, and

Beria's foes, headed by Poskrebyshchev. Khrushchev gives valuable information about this period, too, especially concerning the so-called "Mingrelian affair" in 1952 and the "doctors' plot" in 1953. But these parts of Khrushchev's account must be approached with special caution, for Khrushchev himself, in his day, was completely in Poskrebyshchev's camp and the torture of the arrested doctors was applied by Ignatiev, whom Khrushchev supports even now.

Khrushchev's report, taken as a whole, marks a vital stage in the development of the struggle within the Communist party and is a highly valuable source for understanding the history of the Stalin era. Though Khrushchev distorts the truth in many respects and deliberately lies in a number of cases, historical analysis enables us to uncover many of his distortions. And correct understanding of the history of the Stalin era can be a very important weapon in the struggle against all attempts to preserve the regime which has given such murderous proof of its inner viciousness.